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ABSTRACT

Instructional leadership is long-term dedication to instructional excellence that includes both instructional and school management issues. Recent research suggests that effective principals can make a significant difference in their schools' instructional programs through a combination of personal traits, particularly a strong belief in their schools, and the management strategies used to oversee and guide instruction. This bulletin examines some of the issues and tasks associated with instructional leadership from the perspective of instructional concerns and from the study of leadership behaviors. Within the contexts influencing learning--in communities, in the school's organization, and in the values held by their staffs--reside both the problems and the resources with which instructional leaders work. After considering contexts, this bulletin looks at factors affecting the technology of instruction, including objectives, evaluation, staff development, and organizational climate. Finally, the document concludes by discussing the advantages of sharing leadership responsibilities to promote better instruction and improve student performance. Appended are 46 references. (MLF)

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INSTRUCTIONAL LEADERSHIP: Contexts and Challenges

James R. Weber

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Preface

The Oregon School Study Council is pleased to publish in its OSSC Bulletin series this practice-oriented review of the issues and tasks associated with instructional leadership. This Bulletin is the result of cooperation between the Council and the ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, which commissioned the author and oversaw the publication's development.

James R. Weber is a research analyst and writer for the Clearinghouse. He is the author of several research syntheses, including *Instructional Leadership: A Composite Working Model*, copublished earlier this year by the Clearinghouse and the North Central Regional Educational Laboratory in Elmhurst, Illinois.

Philip K. Piele
Executive Director

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The ERIC Clearinghouse on Educational Management, one of several clearinghouses in the system, was established at the University of Oregon in 1966. The Clearinghouse and its companion units process research results and journal articles for announcement in ERIC's index and abstract bulletins.

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Introduction

Instructional leadership is a term that is widely used but perhaps not well understood. Although principals often rank providing instructional leadership as one of their primary responsibilities, many principals spend little time involved in such activities as instructional supervision, curriculum review, and evaluation of student outcomes—duties clearly related to leading a school's instructional process. Definitions of instructional leadership tend to be general, though most stress the principal's influence on the process and outcomes of instruction. Moreover, the goals of instructional leaders are implied in most definitions, as the following examples show:

> Instructional leadership is the principal's role in providing direction, resources, and support to teachers and students for the improvement of teaching and learning in the school. (James Keefe and John Jenkins 1984)

> We broadly interpret the concept of instructional leadership to encompass those actions that a principal takes, or delegates to others, to promote growth in student learning. Generally such actions focus on setting schoolwide goals, defining the purpose of schooling, providing the resources needed for learning to occur, supervising and evaluating teachers, coordinating staff development programs, and creating collegial relationships with and among teachers. (Wynn De Bevoise 1984)

> Instructional leadership is leadership that is directly related to the processes of instruction where teachers, learners, and the curriculum interact . . . . To exert leadership over this process, the principal or other leader must deal with—in the case of teachers—supervision, evaluation, staff development, and inservice training. In governing the content of instruction, that is, the curriculum, the instructional leader will oversee materials selection and exercise choices in scope and sequence, unit construction, and design of activities. (Keith A. Acheson with Stuart C. Smith 1986)

The general goal of instructional leaders, then, is to improve or maintain conditions that encourage student learning. But to do this a principal must balance the needs of a particular school, the needs of the community in which it is set, and the resources he or she can bring to instructional management. Although much has been written about the perso al traits of instructional

leaders, more recent research has approached the topic by investigating what instructional leaders *do*, what they *believe*, and how they *interact* within the contexts of a school and community.

A Dynamic Process

Although researchers approach the topic of instructional leadership from various perspectives, collectively their findings suggest that it is a dynamic process. Instructional leadership is long-term dedication to instructional excellence, not a one-time resolution to "get more involved in instruction." It includes both instructional and school management issues: evaluation of teachers and students, school climate, curriculum, descipline, material resources for teaching, community support, staffing, decision-making methods at the department and administrative levels, short- and long-term goals for instruction, personal interaction between administrators and teachers, and so forth. As the research suggests, school leadership requires both an understanding of educational technique and a personal vision of academic excellence that can be translated into effective classroom strategies.

The general outline of leadership—what it looks like and what its elements are—has often been debated. Is instructional leadership an ideal or a reality? Is it practical for principals to take on instructional supervision, for instance, at the expense of overall management, such as keeping peace in the halls, classrooms, and community? Furthermore, even if principals can find more time for such activities as observing teachers and reviewing test scores, will teaching and learning be affected by this involvement of principals? Can a nonteaching principal, whose influence on students' classroom learning is only indirect, really be said to improve instructional outcomes? Recent research suggests that effective principals *can* make a significant difference in their schools' instructional programs through a combination of personal traits—particularly a strong belief in their schools—and the management strategies used to oversee and guide instruction.

Evidence indicates that principals do have an influence on student outcomes primarily through their efforts to improve instruction and create a positive learning climate (see Lawrence Lezotte and others 1980, Wilbur Brookover and others 1979, Ronald Edmonds 1979). Recently, a study of elementary teachers in thirty-three Seattle schools showed that student gains in reading and math were higher in schools whose principals were seen as strong leaders than in schools with "weaker" leaders (Richard Andrews and others 1986).

The Scope of This Bulletin

This Bulletin examines some of the issues and tasks associated with instructional leadership—both from the perspective of instructional concerns and from the study of leadership behaviors. It draws heavily from research

spawned by the successful schools studies, which, in turn, have given rise to numerous successful principal studies. Within the contexts influencing learning—in communities, in the school's organization, and in the values held by their staffs—reside both the problems and the resources with which instructional leaders work. After considering contexts, this Bulletin looks at factors affecting the technology of instruction, including objectives, evaluation, staff development, and organizational climate. Finally, it concludes by discussing the advantages of sharing leadership responsibilities to promote better instruction and improve student performance.

Chapter 1

The Contexts of Instructional Leadership

> The leader's integrity is not idealistic. It rests on a pragmatic knowledge of how things work. —Lao Tzu

To understand how principals can affect the instructional environment of schools, researchers have begun to look at the contexts in which the principal must function. Principals operate in a multilevel world, working with influences both within and outside of the school—with community members and their interests as well as with teachers, students, and other administrators. Personal characteristics and beliefs also affect principals' decision-making processes and their style of instructional leadership.

The Community Context

The impact of the community on the behavior of principals and the nature of their work was so evident, say David Dwyer and other researchers from the Far West Laboratory for Educational Research and Development, after closely examining the activities of five successful principals, that they had to modify their model of instructional management. These researchers followed each of the five principals for three workdays each, observing and interviewing them about their intentions and actions. They were primarily interested in how successful principals organize their school's instruction and what roles they play in managing the instructional process. Researchers spent twenty to thirty hours in each school observing classes and talking to students and teachers. Documents pertaining to each school's instructional process were also analyzed. After analyzing the data they gathered, the researchers concluded that the attention of these principals was often devoted to matters external to the school building.

Some of the principals viewed their involvement in community-related tasks in a negative light, as something that reduced the time they could devote

to other kinds of tasks. When principals must spend time negotiating with the police, for instance, they have less time to devote to instruction-related activities. On the other hand, principals tap community resources for needed materials or personnel. Community support can be important at school board meetings and in a variety of school-related fundraising activities. Indeed, community support for unorthodox programs or approaches may serve as a buffer between a principal and the central office. The Far West Lab's study mentions one principal who felt a particular responsibility to his low-income community, defining his role as both a community leader and a school leader. Consequently, he took a personal interest in the problems of students and their parents.

A community's influence on the instructional process of the school is reflected in the Far West Lab's study as well. Student turnover, for instance, is affected by the mobility of families in a district, making student placement a continuing concern for some principals. Funding cuts, resulting from decisions beyond district control, produced heightened concerns about bond issues and, thus, about the erosion of public support for instructional programs.

Moreover, the socioeconomic status of the community appears to be related to successful principals' management styles. A study by Phillip Hallinger and Joseph Murphy (1983) suggests that successful principals in low-income communities tend to be strong managers who assume more authority in instructional matters than do their counterparts in higher-income communities. They also tend to be more actively involved in supervising instruction and in trying to improve school climate. They are instrumental, say Hallinger and Murphy, in creating climate. Higher-income communities, on the other hand, tend to give their principals the role of organizational monitor: coordinating the curriculum, evaluating instruction, and checking on student progress. Similar findings are reported by Shirley Jackson and her colleagues (1983), Richard Andrews and his colleagues (1986), and other researchers who have found that effective low-income urban schools are led by assertive principals with a centralized leadership style. Such principals assume more authority in setting individual teachers' instructional agendas.

The Institutional Context

It is noteworthy that such "external" factors as community socioeconomic status (SES) may influence how a principal tends to manage instruction. However, schools can also be studied as institutional "cultures" with their own particular characters. Like other kinds of institutions—corporations, political parties, and churches, for instance—schools have unique institutional "cultures." But unlike many other institutions, schools do not tend to be hierarchical in structure, with neatly established lines of authority and communication. Although schools may be more or less centralized in

authority, even schools in low-SES areas can be classified as what Karl Weick (1982) has termed "loosely coupled" organizations. Loose coupling means that workers in an organization tend to operate with relative autonomy in nearly all essential aspects of their work: inspection and evaluation are limited; goals are loosely defined; causes and outcomes are often not clearly related; and policy decisions are not always closely related to implementation.

Weick's findings have been confirmed by Terrence Deal and Lynn Celotti (1980) in their study of 103 elementary schools in 34 San Francisco Bay area school districts. They found that, although collateral services such as food services or supplies may be managed in top-down fashion, instruction is not effectively coordinated through formal channels: "For administrators who approach subordinates or superiors assuming that schools operate on a business or industrial logic, one can predict conflict, personal tension or disillusionment, and reduced administrative effectiveness."

Thus, leadership in instruction is not merely a matter of putting a leader's intentions into action. Instructional leaders work within a context in which their workers—that is, teachers—must be trusted as well as trained. As in the case of teacher observation and evaluation, principals must work with the existing resources in a school and improve the quality of instruction through strategies of persuasion and change. When attempting to manage instruction, principals must not disregard the existing norms in their schools. The question for instructional leaders, then, becomes how they can recognize and contribute norms that positively influence instruction.

After summarizing the relevant research, Steven Bossert and others (1984) found that studies have identified at least four characteristics of effective school cultures. These characteristics form a picture that may help to clarify what instructional leaders can hope to accomplish in their pursuit of instructional excellence. Successful schools tend to have

- a school climate conducive to learning—i.e., one that is free from disciplinary problems and vandalism
- a schoolwide emphasis on basic skills instruction
- the expectation among teachers that all students can achieve
- a system of clear instructional objectives for monitoring and assessing students' performances

These characteristics of effective schools appear to be the outgrowth of *school norms*, that is, the expectations collectively held and generally striven after by principals and teachers in these schools. Judith Warren Little (1982) has noted that successful schools always have two vital norms that help to shape teachers' interactions with principals and with each other. First, there is a norm of *collegiality*, by which teachers expect to work closely together as colleagues. Second, there is a norm of *continuous improvement*, meaning that teachers often scrutinize and discuss their teaching practices, and that experimentation in teaching strategies is encouraged. These norms testify to

the mutual support and professional interactions among the staff in effective schools.

The Management Styles of Instructional Leaders

In addition to the community and institutional influences, a third factor also affects principals' management behaviors—their personal characteristics. Even when differences in community and institutional contexts are taken into account, the management styles of successful principals vary widely. Whereas some principals manage by maintaining existing norms in a school and influence others by suggestion, others exercise control over instructional practices at the classroom level, monitoring and even changing teachers' lesson plans.

Of course, principals' behaviors are not solely controlled by their temperaments; as mentioned above, they are also influenced by the surrounding community and by the school itself. The Far West Lab study suggests that principals' management styles may be less obtrusive in schools with established, veteran faculty, and more interventionist in schools with less experienced or rapidly shifting faculties (Dwyer and others 1983).

Nevertheless, principals do seem to exercise their authority with distinctly individual styles. Such stylistic preferences also have some influence over the way principals structure their schools, and over which behaviors they reward and how they reward them. Although the importance of individual style may be overestimated in instructional leadership, its role has been distinguished in the study by Bossert and others (1984). They divide the principal's influence over instruction into two categories: *influence activities* and *influence modes*.

Influence activities are actions that principals initiate to reach their goals. These include whatever activities a principal can record over the course of a workday: phone calls, meetings, observations, desk work, teaching, and monitoring, to name a few. A principal's influence mode refers to the way he or she chooses to accomplish the activities. The modes of influence include the rationales for the principal's behaviors as well as the personal approach that he or she may use. Thus, influence mode extends well beyond personal style to include a principal's beliefs about the nature of instruction and the mission of the school.

The study by Bossert and colleagues identifies four areas of an individual's influence mode that may have a bearing on instructional leadership: (1) their underlying assumptions about human nature, (2) the nature of the leader's intervention into problems, (3) whether the leader stresses workers or outcomes, and (4) the sorts of power a leader chooses to wield to influence others.

Diverse Personal Characteristics

By seeing style in terms of the mode of influence, we cannot separate a

principal's personal management style from his or her actions nor from the contexts that affect instructional leadership. If we accept this view of management style, it is clear that principals need not be born with charismatic personalities to be effective instructional leaders. Indeed, the conclusion of most recent research is that several different personal styles seem to be effective in providing instructional leadership. Ethnographic studies of principals by Arthur Blumberg and William Greenfield (1980) and by Dwyer and others (1983) confirm that the personal characteristics of strong instructional leaders are extremely diverse: some are assertive leaders, others are facilitative; some prefer centralized authority over instructional matters, others give teachers instructional autonomy.

Many studies have provided lists of traits of ideal instructional leaders, but such lists are of little value when principals have to translate these abstract characteristics into specific behaviors or when districts must match principal-candidates against abstractions. Although successful principals possess a wide range of personal characteristics, a few traits seem to be present in most successful instructional leaders.

Qualities of Successful Principals

The welfare of the students in his or her care is probably the single most important concern of successful principals. With their eyes on this ultimate goal—improved student learning—good instructional leaders are able to modify or alter their preferred modes when situations require. Dwyer and his colleagues observed that such situations usually "evolved rapidly in the setting and were based on the principal's perception that a child or children in the school were in physical or emotional jeopardy." Blumberg and Greenfield also point out that many of the effective principals they studied were innovators who retained improving student learning as their goal but continually sought new ways to achieve this goal. Successful principals defined what was possible for them to do only after testing the limits. They avoided prior assumptions about what could and could not be accomplished.

A third quality of successful principals, noted by Dwyer and others, was the predictable routine set down by effective instructional leaders. "With their students and their own overarching goals in mind," these researchers say, "the principals invested their time in the management of the mundane details of their organizations: the physical and emotional elements of the school environment, school-community relations, the teaching staff, schoolwide student achievement, and individual student progress."

One principal, for instance, greeted children as they came to school in the morning. He was a visible presence in the school, who moved through the halls, visited classrooms, talked to teachers and students, and examined students' work. He also expressed interest in students' learning modes—aural, visual, or kinesthetic—urging teachers to adapt lessons to student's preferred modes of learning.

Although these routines involve common acts of the principalship, the researchers stress that the "success of these activities for instructional management hinges . . . on the principal's capacity to connect them to the instructional system." David Dwyer terms this routine, pragmatic approach to instructional management a "strategy of incremental action." Routine activities performed by principals can help keep schools moving toward long-term goals such as maintaining norms of student behavior, suggesting changes in teaching, or developing an awareness of the distractions and changes underway in the school. The effects of these routine actions can be substantial if a principal carefully selects the routines he or she performs.

A principal in the Dwyer study succeeded in focusing the energy in her school on instruction by reducing the number of school rules from twenty to six. Students were able to memorize the rules more easily, allowing discipline to be simplified. Furthermore, she used the contacts she had with students for disciplinary reasons as opportunities for direct teaching, asking students to bring their homework with them when they met with her. She checked their work and informally tested their understanding of the material.

In general, then, the successful schools/successful principals literature indicates that successful principals have a pragmatic understanding of the school environment that assists them in their efforts to improve student performance. Such pragmatism requires influencing the school environment, first through modes of behavior that encourage positive learning outcomes, and second through routine activities that make their work reliable and visible.

The Principal's Influence

With these perspectives, we can answer the question, "How can principals actually have an effect on teacher performance and student learning?" Principals can encourage the adoption of institutional norms that favor collegiality, instructional improvement, and student achievement. They can wield influence in areas that are related either directly or indirectly to instruction. Direct influence can occur in observation and evaluation of teachers, for instance, or in reviewing curriculum. Indirect influence, which can also affect school norms, can occur in setting general instructional goals for the school, garnering community support for instructional programs, organizing and staffing programs, and placing students in appropriate classes.

Given these findings, it is useful to examine more specific strategies that instructional leadership requires, to move from discussing factors that contribute to a principal's general effectiveness to those domains often cited as essential to strong instructional management. Studies of successful schools have much to say about the functions that instructional leaders perform. In addition, ethnographic studies show the striking diversity of influence modes and personal styles used by instructional leaders. We can thus move toward a view of leadership that can be applied to a wide range of schools, taking into account all the modes that a principal might use in directing instruction.

Chapter 2

Domains of Instructional Leadership

To determine the major tasks vital to instructional leadership, Phillip Hallinger and his colleagues (1983) studied the ethnographic descriptions of effective schools and then observed the ways that principals functioned as instructional leaders. Taken together, the three vital tasks they identified encompass both the "technology" of instruction and the "technology" of group management:

- Defining the school's mission: framing and communicating the school's goals
- Managing curriculum and instruction
- Promoting a positive learning climate

The following sections consider the research in each of these areas.

Defining the School's Mission

Because schools are loosely coupled organizations, motivating staff members to work toward common goals can be a major task for an instructional leader. A shared sense of direction already exists in most tightly coupled systems. But in schools, staff members need to be reminded of goals and need a firm but flexible hand on the helm. According to Karl Weick, "The administrator of a loosely coupled system centralizes the system on key values and decentralizes everything else" (1982). Reaching a consensus on instructional goals, then, is extremely important.

Common goals are the glue that binds the system together. "Articulating a theme, reminding people of the theme, and helping people to apply the theme to interpret their work," Weick asserts, "all are major tasks of administrators in loosely coupled systems."

The theme a principal may choose to articulate may be a synthesis of the

influences discussed in chapter 1—a community's long-term needs; his or her personal vision of what a school can be; and realistic, attainable day-to-day objectives in the classroom. To find the theme, a principal may need to assess the values and strengths inherent in the community, students, and staff.

Addressing Community Expectations

James Lipham and his colleagues (1985) crystalize the principal's role as interpreter of values by pointing out the sorts of objectives that need to be set for a school to cohere. Foremost among these interpretive jobs is perceiving the community's expectations:

> Even the most conscientious efforts to ensure curricular responsiveness to cultural demands will sometimes prove frustrating in our complex and constantly changing society. Nevertheless, it is a principal's obligation to assess continually the expectations held by the community for the school as an institution, thereby capitalizing on societal pressures to ensure a contemporary curriculum.

The broad objectives of schools have generally encompassed at least four dimensions: intellectual, social, personal (including aesthetic, ethical, and physical), and vocational (Lipham and others 1985). Both those outside of and within a school are likely to agree on the need for schools to address these four dimensions. However, which of these dimensions receives the greatest emphasis may shift from time to time; certainly, at any given time, one community interest group may be more influential than another.

In 1918, for instance, the Commission on the Reorganization of Secondary Education stressed the promotion of health as the primary emphasis to be expected of schools, followed by command of fundamental (intellectual) processes, worthy home membership, vocational preparation, civic education, worthy use of leisure, and ethics. By 1960, a survey of school and community leaders showed that intellectual goals took priority, followed in order of importance by social skills, personal development, and, finally, productive (including vocational) skills. A more recent study—coming at a time when earning capacity has assumed greater importance—may rank productivity near the top of the public's list of educational priorities.

Of course, principals may be hard pressed to distinguish between significant and insignificant changes in community expectations. For instance, although there has been a gradual shift in emphasis from intellectual skills to personal and social skills in school curricula, communities still expect schools to teach students the academic basics. Principals can monitor the community's real needs by being actively involved in community groups, attending professional meetings to compare experiences, or taking courses in the sociology, politics, or history of society's demands on schools.

A principal can identify the community issues affecting instruction more formally by conducting a needs assessment survey, by indepth interviews with community members, or by initiating an ongoing community group.

Moreover, Lipham and others (1985) strongly recommend associating issues with particular community figures—noting their roles in the community, their reputations vis-a-vis the schools, or their positions on issues in the past.

A Vision for Success

The community may provide a frame of reference for defining a school's mission, but it is the leaders' visions that guide the day-to-day functioning of schools. In Dwyer and others' study of eight principals, all the successful principals "had a working theory that guided their actions. They all sought to understand how modifications in the structures of their schools influenced youngsters." All the participants in the study thought of themselves as "the pivotal points" around which the disparate pieces of the school turned. Blumberg and Greenfield also found principals' visions to be a leavening agent. They quote some of the principals on what they want their schools to be, noting the diversity in content but the similarity in the strength of their individual visions. The following samples are representative:

> What I don't want it to be is a single-minded approach. I don't want it to be an open school or a traditional school, or a school without walls, or a math school or a science school . . . . I want to be able to accommodate the different learning styles of different kids and teachers, the different strengths of different teachers. I think if we have that rare person who is an excellent lecturer, I say let that person lecture, and in fact, encourage that person to lecture . . . capitalize on those strengths.

> I figure if the staff gets educated, and gets exposed to new ideas, they'll transmit them to kids . . . and I found it very frustrating in the beginning to realize where they were, because I kept thinking they were here, and I'd get more data and find out they were even further back than that . . . . They're flying by the seat of their pants. They don't know what they're doing, they don't know why they're doing it. They're doing the wrong thing up in their own classroom, and I don't think that's okay. I think they need to know why they're doing what they're doing. Maybe they won't change a thing . . . but at least if they know . . . what purpose it has to the total picture, then that's okay.

> When I went in there . . . I think the essential thing was to make calm out of chaos . . . . For the most part we were successful in doing that . . . . I don't think I was successful in turning around the education program . . . in terms of scholastic achievement. Each year we took an increasingly larger number of students who were already academically troubled in reading and basic skills . . . and we instituted programs to deal with this clientele but I always felt that we were not getting them to achieve . . . . We had too many kids graduating with "D" averages, just barely minimum, and that was the failure that I saw.

Successful leaders do not stop with envisioning what they want for the schools, though. They also actively work to realize their vision. According to Blumberg and Greenfield, "it was this personal commitment to a particular

educational or organizational ideal, and their willingness to articulate and work for what they believed in and felt was vital to the success of the students and teachers in their schools, that distinguish [successful principals] from many of their administrative peers." Indeed, perhaps because they have an overarching vision of what the school could be, these leaders are better able to take the initiative in improving instruction. Because of their educational ideals, for instance, they can emphasize student achievement and teacher performance despite community and institutional pressures to settle for mediocrity or a diffusion of energy. Moreover, acting on their ideals for the school probably prevents them from getting bogged down in administrative trivia (Lipham and others 1985). They tend to share the paperwork with other administrative staff, allowing themselves more time to pursue instructional leadership initiatives.

Although visions can provide direction and impetus for instructional leadership, leaders must involve other people in the realization of these visions. The process of staff involvement means communicating goals—perhaps being willing to revise unrealistic goals but insisting upon approaches consistent with the leader's overarching ideals of schooling. The setting of overall objectives for schooling, program objectives, course objectives, and unit objectives serves to translate theory about outcomes into reality. An instructional leader, researchers agree, must attend to each of these goal levels, reviewing and monitoring them for consistency and relevance.

Defining Practical Goals

The program, course, and unit objectives are the "hard" instructional goals—those down-to-earth concerns that may be called the "technology" of instruction. It is the hard instructional goals that leaders must use to transform programs. In these goals, the objectives become visibly related to the students and to classroom activities. For the principal and other potential instructional leaders, the goals should allow them to routinize their daily activities and to share clear goals to work for.

One ambitious program to clarify goals was implemented in the Tyler Independent School District in Tyler, Texas. Their management design, comprising six annual stages, allows goal setting to take advantage of evaluations of programs and formal analysis of achievement data. In a yearly cycle, the principal directs the staff in (1) identifying instructional needs in the school; (2) establishing goals for the year; (3) developing a plan of action to achieve the goals; (4) managing the resources, including providing staff development; (5) implementing the plan; and (6) evaluating the process. Then the cycle begins anew for the next year by analyzing the achievement data and identifying needs. The principal is assisted by two committees: one inside the building, composed of teachers; the other, a district-level committee, including central office staff who oversee curriculum improvement.

The building-level committee sets yearly goals for the school, with input from the faculty and principal on what activities during the coming year could

improve achievement in areas in which it is low. Once the overall school goals are identified, strategies are developed for specific areas of improvement, including the resources that will be devoted to that target goal. For instance, if fifth-grade students had low math achievement scores, the next year's goals might be to raise mean performance to the seventy-fifth percentile. To do so, strategies might include preparing teaching aids to help students move from concrete to abstract thinking in multiplication. Teachers could use Piaget's developmental stages as a basic theoretical model; they could also be allocated money to purchase workbooks or computer software designed to improve semiconcrete thinking skills. Finally, evaluating students' progress in math would require testing for the target skills.

Another example of a principal's specifying instructional goals is provided by Herbert J. Klausmeier and colleagues (1983), who propose an ambitious program for individualized instruction in secondary schools. Though ambitious, such a program is attainable, as revealed by a four-year study of five schools that implemented elements of the proposed instructional design. The objectives used by Klausmeier's team link a comprehensive objective, two instructional areas, and eight support areas. The instructional areas comprise program planning and individual course planning for each student. The objectives for program planning illustrate the levels of specificity that allow planning to proceed flexibly in various schools and situations:

Comprehensive Objective

An individual instructional program is arranged for the student in each course and other activity that is part of the student's total educational program. It takes into account the student's aptitudes, interests, motivation, learning styles, career goals, and other personal and social characteristics.

Illustrative Enabling Objectives

The instructional program of the student:

Is planned by the student and the teacher of the course at the beginning of the course.

Includes course and unit objectives that are appropriate for the student in terms of the student's aptitude, entering achievement level, and career goals.

Provides an appropriate amount of time in class and during or outside school hours to suit the student's rate of achieving his/her objectives in the course.

Provides for appropriate individual attention by the teacher to take into account the student's motivation and other personal characteristics.

Provides for an appropriate amount of teacher-directed individual, pair, small-group, and large-group activity to take into account the student's need for

independence and preferences for mode of instruction.

Provides for an appropriate amount of student-initiated individual, pair, small-group, and large-group activity to take into account the student's need for independence and preferences for mode of instruction.

Provides for an appropriate use of printed materials, audio-visual materials, and direct experiencing to take into account the student's preferred styles of learning—visual, auditory, tactual, or kinesthetic. (Klausmeier and others 1983)

The eight support areas of instruction involve objectives in curriculum planning for students, career education, progressive decision-making responsibility for students, evaluating student outcomes, administrative support for instruction, student advising, home-school-community relations, school support for community groups, and research and development.

Like the plan for identifying specific instructional goals in the Tyler Independent School District program, the plan proposed by Klausmeier and others depends upon analyzing the school's performance, identifying weaknesses and target goals, and planning with the student in mind. To keep goals realistic, principals in both programs rely heavily on teachers for input and review. On the other hand, teachers depend on principals for leadership of professional development and evaluation, topics considered in the next section.

Managing Curriculum and Instruction

The implementation of a school's mission can be seen most clearly in curriculum and instruction. As in defining goals, the major tasks confronting a principal in implementation may actually be recognizing the instructional options available to teachers and then selecting, with teachers, those that best fit the constraints provided by the school environment.

That instructional leaders need to know about instructional methods and trends is fairly obvious. While a perceptive yet untrained observer may be able to discern gaps in a teacher's presentation, leaders need to provide informed advice and communicate priorities for improvement. At the very least, instructional leaders must share with teachers an understanding of instructional goals and a common language for describing and analyzing teaching practices. This sort of knowledge may be acquired most readily when instructional training and study includes both principals and teachers, as Tom Bird and Judith Warren Little (1985) attest. Collegiality, which Little (1982) defines as "recourse to other's knowledge and experience, and to shared work and discussion," has a profound effect on instructional success.

Essential Knowledge

Of course, a principal's knowledge must be credible to teachers. A list of

some of the areas of knowledge needed in instructional leadership, such as the one following, may discourage potential leaders at first. However, as with most lists of skills, a practitioner's working knowledge of these areas may be greater than he or she assumes:

Trends in content fields, such as
- English/Language Arts
- Reading
- Foreign Languages
- Mathematics
- Science
- Physical and Health Education
- Social Studies

Trends in Media and Methods, such as those in
- Textbook selection
- New Technologies
- Teacher-Developed Materials
- Computer Software
- Personalized Education
- Direct Instruction
- Mastery Learning
- Cooperative Small-Group Learning
- Study Skills

Classroom Supervision Areas, such as
- Teaching Styles
- Class Size
- Grouping Practices
- Use of Time and Space
- Instructional Strategies
- Instructional Media/Materials
- Homework

Considering this list of knowledge and trends, it is doubtful that every principal can master all the information necessary to be a perfect curriculum advisor, as well as perform all the other duties in the principal's job description. Like a good infielder, though, it is not so important for principals to be everywhere or know everything, but to be in the right place at the right time (or to know the "right stuff" to improve a teacher's instruction). So, how much must a principal know about instruction?

There are two basic components to what principals need to know: (1) the general processes common to effective teaching and learning, and (2) the specific needs and interests of their school's instructional staff. Within these two areas, principals can have a pragmatic understanding of curriculum and

instruction.

In short, they must be experts on the general principles of effective teaching. At the very least, they must understand basic principles of learning: that examples allow concretion of abstract ideas, that students should grasp one concept before moving on to another, and that group instruction and individual instruction may meet different needs.

Next, most administrators seem to agree that, to be effective instructional leaders, principals should acquire information and advocate skills that are interdisciplinary. Writing and library use, for instance, are cross-disciplinary skills; principals can encourage writing in most of the students' classes or require them to use the library for research projects. According to one principal, Gilbert A. Weldy (1979), principals should possess knowledge that is both broad and pertinent:

> Although a principal cannot have specific knowledge of every curricular area taught in his school, his knowledge should at least embrace the general trends and movements within each subject area. He must have sufficient knowledge to understand and evaluate curricular innovations that are being tried in schools throughout the country. Some may be sound improvements developed under careful, professional supervision. Others may be narrow opinions by self-interest groups, while still others may be gimmicks and would have no value. The principal needs the knowledge and ability to perceive the difference.

Knowledge and Skills for Effective Supervision

To be an effective supervisor of teachers, an instructional leader must also be familiar with and sensitive to the teachers he or she supervises. According to Keith Acheson (1985), many would-be instructional leaders often simply see what teachers are doing and then tell them what they ought to do differently. "This simple approach overlooks the reality that only when teachers are able to do what they *intend* can much progress be made toward getting them to do what they *should* be doing." It is critical to make sure that teachers share the same goals as their leaders—to see that they are intending to do what they should be doing. Thus, evaluation and training are inseparable activities.

Acheson maintains that a principal needs to have knowledge and skills in three areas when observing and evaluating teachers: planning with the teacher, observing instruction or gathering data from other sources, and providing feedback. Says Acheson,

> *Intelligent planning* requires a knowledge of the personality and characteristics of the teacher. In addition to knowing strategies, research, and subject matter, the instructional leader must be knowledgeable of observation instruments and techniques for taking systematic data.
>
> *Recording useful data* in the classroom requires skill, practice, and understanding a variety of techniques along with a knack for being unobtrusive.

Skillful giving of feedback relies on knowledge of:

— a variety of teaching strategies or models of teaching
— what has been learned about teacher effectiveness through research
— the subject matter being taught (to analyze the process in relation to the content)
— human development and child psychology (to analyze what students are doing—and maybe even why)
— the official curriculum, pertinent policies, regulations, and laws

Acheson's list implies that instructional leaders need to know both what affects learning and how to communicate those principles to teachers.

Inservice training can help clarify teachers' intentions as well as bring intentions and performance together. They may also help to establish schoolwide goals and a common vocabulary of teaching that is shared by all the instructional staff. A principal who participates in—or even directs—inservice training will be much better prepared to perform meaningful teacher observations later. Inservice programs can be schoolwide or specific to certain departments (intended for the math faculty only, for instance). These inservice sessions can afford principals opportunities for centralizing teaching methods or "eavesdropping" on trends in specific content areas.

Learning from Teachers

Principals' knowledge of curriculum and instruction can be extended greatly by listening to teachers. Since it is unlikely that anyone will have comprehensive knowledge of all instructional areas, instructional leaders can keep their expectations and judgments of teachers realistic by watching and listening. Insights gained from listening may require patience and a temporary suspension of judgment on the principal's part. One principal, for example, questioned a teacher's abilities because the teacher's approach seemed somewhat unorthodox:

> For two years, during observations of and visits with her, [the principal] tried to understand her procedures and her rationales for them. At the end of that time, the principal admitted that he still did not fully understand all aspects of the teacher's performance. But he said that he had gathered enough information to convince him that she was highly effective with students—and thus he supported her strongly. (Rutherford 1985)

Because there are so many variables in teaching and learning, an unorthodox approach may actually be in the mainstream of real education. Managing curriculum and instruction involves being familiar with content areas, instructional goals, and the wide range of approaches that can be used to meet those goals.

Encouraging Collaborative Planning

Principals can also learn about a school's range of instructional goals by encouraging teachers to plan collectively for instructional improvement and then sitting in on their planning sessions. Schools can have teacher teams plan curriculum or learning goals, or they can assign temporary task forces to address schoolwide instructional problems. In these arrangements, teachers identify the goals (the instructional problems to be solved) and the new approaches to be initiated in their areas of expertise.

Karolyn J. Snyder (1983), an educational consultant, compares schools to football teams in their organizational possibilities. Just as teams are trained in units, so, too, can schools perform staff development in specialized units: "principals might well seek to organize instruction around teaching teams for various age levels (for instance, 5-7, 8-9, 10-12) so that teachers can specialize in particular teaching functions (math, record keeping, ordering, student management, and team management) for the benefit of the entire team." In this sort of goal-setting arrangement, the principal can monitor the team's goals and make sure they complement the overall instructional goals of the department and the school for grade levels.

Promoting a Positive Learning Climate

School climate measures and formal studies have been plagued by the problem of definition, making it difficult to trace the effect of school climate on the learning process. The terms *school environment, learning climate, social climate,* and *learning environment* have been used to refer to diverse aspects of schooling, including school discipline procedures, physical layout of the school building, noise levels, interruptions during class, standards set by parents and teachers, degree of collegiality among teachers, or relationships between staff and administration. A change in any of these factors could change the school's climate.

Despite the vagueness in definitions, no principal seems to doubt that these environmental factors influence the learning and teaching taking place in a school. There does seem to be almost a palpable "feel" or "tone" to each school—an organizational culture—that comprises the attitudes of those who work and learn there. According to Brookover and Erickson (1975), "These factors may be broadly conceived as the norms of the social system and expectations held for various members of the group and communicated to members of the group."

The participants in the Far West Laboratory's study (Dwyer and others 1983) on instructional leadership all believed school climate was a controllable quality. School climate, according to these successful principals, encompasses the entire experience of students throughout their school day. As one principal in the Far West study put it, "School climate starts at the curb." Principals' view of the importance of climate was reflected in a 1979 NASSP

survey (Edgar Kelley 1980). According to the principals surveyed, the emotional tone of a school, its sense of purpose, and its cognitive environment all highly influence students' achievement and self-concepts.

The Principal's Influence

Studies have consistently found that principals who are "visible presences" in their schools are catalysts for an energized learning climate. Walking the halls, popping into classrooms, speaking spontaneously with teachers and students, attending faculty meetings at department or grade levels—all these activities keep the leader an active ingredient in the chemistry of instructional planning and development.

Presence may include not only monitoring events, but also intervening to improve instruction. For example, one principal who identified trouble in implementing a new mathematics program arranged for a skilled mathematics teacher to spend one semester as an inschool consultant. The consultant spent time teaching low-achieving students and helping with testing and record-keeping. This assistance was effective and raised morale among teachers and students (Chad Rutherford 1985). Such a demonstration of a principal's commitment to instructional effectiveness often leads to teachers thinking of improvement strategies or other instructional needs. A principal who initiates and responds to needs in the learning climate can expect a chain reaction—new ideas, supportive and critical, or old ideas recycled.

In principals' influence on instructional climate, the nature of principal-teacher relationships is the primary factor affecting students' perceptions of the environment. Chad Ellett and Herbert Walberg (1979) found that principals influence students mostly by influencing teachers' performances. They collected and correlated data on principal performance, student performance, and teacher satisfaction from 45 schools, involving 6,963 students, 1,200 teachers, and 45 principals. The data supported the model of a principal's mediated influence on learning climate, but also found some interesting correlate information on students' perceptions of principal involvement.

Notably, students from schools having positive teacher attitudes and higher student achievement reported a low frequency of interaction with the principal. In these schools, the researchers speculated, principal-student interactions—usually associated with disciplinary problems—do not occur as much as in low-achieving, negative-climate schools. Moreover, teachers in high-achieving schools perceived their principals as more effective than did teachers in other schools. In fact, the strongest correlation of the Ellett-Walberg study was in teachers' perceptions of the school environment and their assessments of principal competency:

> In schools where the principal is perceived by teachers as frequently and effectively performing important behaviors in the school environment, teachers' attitudes toward a variety of work-related dimensions are positive and often show strong connections with student outcomes.

Conversely, low student achievement and teacher alienation may be caused by factors external to the school, such as neighborhood or family disruptions, or by ongoing divisions between principals and teachers.

Crucial Tasks

Indeed, the instructional climate of a school seems to reflect all the other leadership variables, including the school's sense of mission and the principal's supervision of teachers. The role of the instructional leader as teacher-supervisor probably most strongly determines his or her effect on instructional climate. Edgar Kelley (1980) has identified several "crucial tasks" the principal fulfills in exercising leadership for climate improvement:

- — Stating expected outcomes
- — Stating expected behaviors on the part of teachers as a means of achieving intended outcomes
- — Determining whether or not teachers understand and share in the expectations that have been established
- — Securing necessary support services so that teachers are able to implement behaviors aimed at accomplishment of expectations
- — Collecting feedback from teachers (and, as appropriate, from other audiences) to determine the extent to which goals are being attained and the extent to which principal behaviors are helpful to, and supportive of, teachers in efforts at accomplishment of intended behaviors and intended outcomes

In essence, Kelley's list involves activities that (1) protect teachers' instructional time by minimizing disciplinary or other interruptions and (2) establish expected standards of achievement. Kelley suggests that principals can help teachers enforce a school's rules of conduct by developing and implementing a plan for classroom management, for instance, or by involving parents as well as teachers in establishing contingencies for behaviors. Assessing a student's awareness of a teacher's rules also may identify problems of communication. Finally, principals can expand teachers' options by referring students to nonschool agencies or by developing a minimum of three alternative solutions for any disciplinary problem. All these suggestions involve sharing responsibility for discipline and recognizing that collegiality is an essential element in school climate.

Chapter 3

Observing Teachers

The direct observation of teachers by principals is high on just about everyone's list of effective instructional leadership methods. In fact, research suggests that, when done well, observation and feedback are among the best forms of instructional management. In one study, principals themselves listed classroom observation as the second most effective strategy for improving instruction (ranked only after shared leadership for teachers) (Barbara Guzzetti and Michael Martin 1984). But in practice, principals do not spend much time working directly with teachers on instruction, as Van Cleve Morris and his colleagues (1982) found in a three-year study of twenty-four principals. It appears, then, that meaningful teacher observation is more praised than practiced.

Considering the time principals must devote to observations to give them some validity and the potential impact of observation on principal-teacher relationships, it is not surprising that in some schools observations occur only infrequently and, when done at all, are cursory. The issues surrounding a commitment to a teacher observation program go to the heart of the problems of teaching and learning.

Effective Observation Practices

Tom Bird and Judith Warren Little (1985) found five issues that separate valuable observation practices from those that were without purpose. Effective observation occurs in an environment in which there is agreement on five points: (1) the positive value of observation, (2) its place in the organization, (3) its nature and relevance for teachers, (4) the professional norms that it may strain, and (5) the time constraints on adequate observations.

Bird and Little found that the value accorded to observation differed markedly among the schools studied. Two of the schools allotted time for observation and feedback even though doing so meant taking time away from other activities the principals could be involved in. Establishing observation as a priority seemed to be a constant struggle. They noted one assistant principal

who delayed all his observations for a semester because he had to design new student identification cards. In another school, principals were spending time policing the halls for smokers after the school board closed the student smoking area, which necessitated abandoning a well-planned observation schedule. Unfortunately, the vulnerability of observation plans also may cast doubt on an administrator's view of their importance.

In addition to improving teacher performance, observations can be psychologically and socially beneficial as well. One such benefit may be giving teachers a sense of excitement about performing work that matters. Observations may also have professional rewards (as in advancement, recognition, or collegiality) or bureaucratic consequences. Moreover, observations can reflect on the administrators, as well. For instance, observations range from dropping in and out of classrooms to a systematic, structured supervision requiring followup and regular interaction between teachers and observers. The methods of observation reflect the administrators' views of their roles in supporting the work of teachers.

The Organization of Observations

A second cluster of interrelated issues surrounds the organization of observations: the number of teachers observed in a semester, the frequency of observations, and the duration of the observations. In fact, as Bird and Little point out, observations may severely reduce the time administrators have to devote to other activities. Teachers told them that they begin to have faith in an observer's understanding of their teaching only after four visits. Calculating the frequency of visits, Bird and Little illustrate the demands on administrators in the accompanying table.

Of course, there are risks involved with observations that are too infrequent, too cursory, or too long. Infrequent observations leave too much to rumor about expected kinds of instruction. Too many classroom observations in a day—ten, for instance—can take a toll on a principal's attention and reduce their value for improving a teacher's performance. Although a principal's "visibility" is a virtue touted by school effectiveness research, it has to be balanced against effectiveness. Finally, the length of an observer's stay in a classroom might raise an issue of appropriateness—of "what's right and what's rude." The "right" length of an observation may depend on a particular school's culture: whether staying for an entire period or observing for two days in a row may call for special explanations to a teacher.

Because a teacher's faith in observations rests heavily on the criteria and procedures the observer uses to analyze teaching, observers should attempt to increase teachers' knowledge, confidence, skill, or professionalism. Apparently, the more frequently teachers are observed, the better use they can make of criticism. Bird and Little have found that teachers who are observed frequently make use of feedback even about clumsy performances as well as

TABLE 1
A SMALL ILLUSTRATION OF POSSIBILITIES FOR EXPANDING OBSERVATION AND FEEDBACK

Teachers claim that they do not begin to have faith in an observer's grasp of their teaching in less than four visits. What are the possibilities for producing observation on that scale?

Taking a faculty of 80 teachers, how long will it take to observe everyone once if observations are done at the rate of:

Observers	One a week	Three a week	Five a week
Principal alone	Two years	27 weeks	16 weeks
Principal and one assistant principal	40 weeks	13 weeks	8 weeks
Principal and two assistant principals	27 weeks	9 weeks	5 weeks
Principal, AP, and four dept. chairs	Variable rates for administrators and chairs, e.g., three a week for administrators and one a week for chairs would require 8 weeks.		

Source: Bird and Little 1985

about those that are more polished. They develop a "thick skin" for criticism and often request observations during difficult class times if they believe they can learn from the observation. "I wish there were more observations," commented one teacher, reflecting the helpfulness of the observer: "This semester I'm trying out a new unit on heroes with a lot of team learning. I so wanted him here when I tried it out. He tried but he couldn't make it. But if he does give you time you know it's going to be quality time" (Bird and Little).

The Need for Reciprocity

Finally, Bird and Little point out the most sensitive issue in teacher observation—the problem of establishing reciprocal professional relations. It

is problematic—and crucial—because nearly all the approaches to observation can be futile if a teacher does not sense a principal's respect, or even deference, for their own professional abilities. Putting the emphasis of an observation on performance, rather than personality, allows a teacher to feel that the principal believes in his or her capacity to improve.

Similarly, teachers must be able to trust their instructional leaders in at least three ways if the benefits of direct observation are to be maintained: first, they must believe that their observers intend no harm to them; second, that the criteria and procedures of evaluation are predictable and open; and third, that observers will provide information to improve the nuts-and-bolts of their teaching.

Resistance to the third area of trust, which really involves teachers receiving the clear feedback and followup that can change their behaviors, may be psychological in nature, stemming from a belief that the observer's only real purpose is to criticize. Observations have the potential for becoming a glib sidewalk superintendency, with the observer feeling little or no responsibility and taking few risks themselves. At its worst, observation can actually erode the collegiality and norms of excellence that it was meant to fortify.

The observers who praise but fail to offer constructive criticism, or who criticize without analysis, are also sending the message to teachers that their feedback is formulaic, remote, and uninterested in developing the teacher's potential; they may even lack an understanding of the realities of teaching.

Bird and Little, who noticed these tendencies in the schools they observed, propose a five-point requirement of reciprocity that is designed to offset some of the vulnerability teachers experience during observation by setting high standards for observers.

- First, the observer must promise to bring knowledge and skill to the observation in order to help the practitioner. At the least, the observer must promise that "I can make and report to you (the teacher) a description of your lesson which will shed new light on your practices and thus help you to improve them."

- The teacher, in turn, must defer to the observer's assertion—in effect, validating the observation process as a valuable instrument for improving his or her teaching. He or she must listen carefully and actively.

- To warrant his or her authority, the observer must display knowledge and skills a teacher can use: making a detailed, revealing record of the observation for the teacher, or offering feasible alternatives to the teacher's practices. This may involve requiring that written praise of classroom teaching be as specific and detailed as written criticism, or that teachers be able on occasion to observe those who observe them.

- Next, the teacher must try to change his or her practices in some significant way: in behavior, use of materials, approach to students, or perspectives.

- Finally, the observer must try to improve along with the teachers, with training, practice, and observation of the interactions with teachers.

According to Bird and Little, the basis of reciprocity in observation lies in the principle that "observation cannot be simpler than the teaching it supports." Obviously, efforts to improve the complex art of teaching are ongoing, requiring incremental improvements and starting with modest efforts at which both teachers and observer can succeed. Future observations can then build upon those successes.

This manifesto of reciprocity is built upon sound andragogical ideas—that is, what is effective in teaching adults rather than in teaching children (pedagogy). Although it has been in currency since the 1830s, andragogy has recently crossed the Atlantic from Europe with the help of Malcolm Knowles, who emphasizes that experience and a concern with pragmatic problems lie at the root of adults'—and thus teachers'—learning potentials.

Adults expect that their knowledge and experience will be recognized by their teachers/evaluators; consequently, they react negatively to feedback that they see as an attack on their competence. "As a consequence," conclude R. Bruce McPherson and John Lorenz (1985), "principals should avoid proposing prescriptions for adult learners. The educator of adults must act as a facilitator, a resource person whom the learner respects and trusts. The facilitator listens, accepts, understands, and helps the adult learner reach his or her goals."

The focus in an instructional leader's observation practices, then, must be on the problems and needs of the teachers. Using patterns of joint planning and shared responsibility, teachers can be influenced by an observer toward high standards. The potential for observation is great: for influencing higher expectations in instruction and, by extension, motivated outcomes in students.

Chapter 4

Sharing Instructional Leadership

Even principals who put a high priority on instructional leadership find that, despite their good intentions, little of their workday may actually be spent handling matters directly related to teaching and learning. The principal's day, observes Van Cleve Morris and colleagues (1982),

> allows little rank-ordering of priorities; everything seems to blend together in an undifferentiated jumble of activities that are presumably related, however remotely, to the ongoing rhythm and purpose of the larger enterprise. In one instance, a principal was wrestling with a critical problem in the school's curricular program—the freshman history sequence. And yet the entire matter was elbowed aside, denied a position of deserved prominence, by a cascade of other concerns—vandalized auditorium seats, a foul-mouthed girl intimidating her teacher, bomb threats by anonymous phone callers, and cockroaches in the locker room.

Bruce Howell (1981) found that, at best, elementary principals devote about 30 percent of their time to instructional leadership duties, while secondary principals devote only 20 percent to instruction.

A Neglected Activity

The question, then, is how to work instructional leadership into a principal's day. The danger—one that few principals will risk—is that they will neglect the noninstructional demands only to find that their school leadership role is neglected. In fact, certain management duties are essential to instructional leadership. To be good instructional leaders, principals must manage the nonclassroom activities that create a positive learning climate for learners and teachers. One of the major duties of instructional leaders, according to recent reports, is to maximize instructional time by minimizing the number of classroom interruptions and by running interference between

teachers and parents or district office. Principals may be more effective leaders by managing school business in order to smooth the way for classroom achievement.

Besides having important duties other than classroom supervision, principals might also suffer from a superman or superwoman complex—the belief that they need to do everything equally well. Unfortunately, with too little time or background to perform adequately all the necessary tasks of leadership, this complex may result in a principal doing everything equally poorly.

Clearly, it is preferable that a principal's duties—whether instruction-related or management-related—be shared, not abandoned. In most schools, other administrative staff, department heads, teachers, or outside consultants are available to share instructional leadership. Sometimes these people may even be better qualified. A department head, for example, is probably more familiar than the principal with effective teaching techniques or appropriate content area goals. A wise principal could use the leadership position of a department head, then, for goal-setting and teacher supervision. The principal would then be the primary goal-setter and supervisor, collaborating with and overseeing the leadership exercised by department heads.

Proponents of shared leadership offer two compelling arguments for implementing some structural form of team leadership. First, the need for sharing leadership is all too clear to those who know a principal's wide range of responsibilities. The findings presented above reflect the myriad of demands made on principals, the jumble of immediate crises, and long-range plans. For example, the time necessary to meet even one component of instructional leadership—teacher supervision—would severely restrict the time principals have for other areas of school management.

Unofficial Leadership

Even in schools where leadership is not officially shared, numerous individual teachers, department heads, or other staff members usually fill unofficial leadership positions. In other words, instructional leadership is probably already being shared, perhaps by staff members with widely different views of school goals or incompatible educational philosophies. A principal, then, would benefit from acknowledging the unofficial instructional leaders and working with them to accomplish academic goals.

Steven Kerr and John M. Jermier (1978), researchers in organizational leadership, caution that organizations such as schools do not usually have simple leadership structures. In such organizations, substitutes for official leadership may tend to "neutralize" the official leader's plans. In addition, some workers tend to be independent or indifferent toward organizational rewards. Sometimes the work environment itself produces a distance between superiors and workers—this is often the case in schools, where teachers are

isolated in classrooms.

Some substitutes for official leadership arise spontaneously and naturally. Vague or unrealistic job descriptions of staff members, for instance, may force someone to fill a gap in leadership—as when a teacher assumes responsibility for investigating alternative textbooks or when teaching teams find persons from outside the school to give a demonstration or answer students' questions.

Norman Newberg and Allan Glatthorn (1982) noticed this sort of unofficial shared leadership in the junior high schools they studied. They found that instructional leadership was spread out among a variety of people rather than centralized in the principal. Like other researchers, such as Russell Gersten and his colleagues (1982) and William Firestone and Robert Herriott (1982), they found that secondary schools generate instructional leaders among the staff more frequently than do elementary schools, where leadership tends to be centralized in the principal. In two of the junior high schools Newberg and Glatthorn studied, the reading chairpersons seemed to play an influential part; in another, the English Department chair was the key leader; and in a third school, a vice principal was the most important instructional force.

Perhaps, as Caroline Persell (1982) argues, too much research and public discussion of instructional leadership has emphasized the principal's duties, neglecting the *unofficial* leadership in schools. Principals, she points out, cannot—and most do not—expect their plans to be instituted without alteration or interpretation by teachers and staff.

The key to effective instructional leadership may very well lie, first, in the flexibility a principal exhibits in sharing leadership duties, and, second, in the clarity with which a principal matches leadership duties with individuals who can perform them collaboratively. "Effective leadership," say Kerr and Jermier, "might be described as the ability to supply subordinates with needed guidance and good feelings which are not being supplied by other sources." In sharing instructional leadership, then, the principal needs to know what tasks need to be shared and just how much guidance he or she should provide. To address these matters, let us look first at the critical leadership functions researchers have found in schools, then at the balance between sharing and delegating.

Critical Leadership Functions

In their study of instructional leadership in urban districts, Gersten and colleagues (1982) found that principals assume little of the instructional leadership in some districts. Most guidance for teachers, for instance, comes from trained supervisors and consultants. In answering why principals were not more involved, the researchers concluded that schools have sets of leadership duties—responsibilities that need to be done—regardless of anyone's job descriptions. These *critical functions* are necessary to

maintaining and improving instructional programs.

An educational change program in a large urban district was successful, Gersten and his colleagues found, despite the indifference or opposition of the principals involved. The key to the program's success was the daily down-to-earth technical assistance given to teachers on classroom matters. Other research, too, has indicated that federally funded programs may be successful without much support from administrators and that successful programs are not dependent upon consistent administrative policies (See Gersten and others, who cited additional sources).

Giving teachers access to technical assistance with their classroom problems is one of four critical functions vital to the health of instructional programs, say Gersten and his colleagues. The other three critical functions are as follows:

1. specific inservice training of teachers on classroom issues, with extended followup
2. an educational model that succeeds with difficult-to-teach children
3. a system for monitoring student and teacher performance

Clearly, none of these vital activities can be shouldered entirely by a principal. In practice, they are carried out by a variety of teachers and staff with a range of expertise—reading coordinators, parent groups, department heads, school-level committees, or staff consultants.

Classroom teachers, it is generally recognized, do not look to administrators first for help in solving classroom problems. They perceive administrators as too far removed from daily teaching difficulties to offer much real help (Gorton 1971 in Glatthorn and Newberg 1984). According to Roland Barth (1980), teachers are concerned with the *means* of instruction in most of their work with students. The critical functions of instructional leadership are actually the specific support teachers need to solve classroom problems.

Those critical leadership functions that the principal does not control directly he or she must, of course, oversee. In fact, in shared leadership arrangements, one of the most important tasks of the principal is to make sure that the critical functions are being performed.

Just what are some of these critical functions? A list of some primary leadership functions appears in table 2 on pages 34 and 35. Of the functions listed, some relate to guiding teachers, others to improving or maintaining high standards in students' work, and a third group to curriculum supervision. These three domains of instructional leadership include activities that may be shared and those that are finally the responsibility of the principal.

Supervision and evaluation of teachers, for instance, are ultimately the principal's duty. But it is possible to divide them, as Acheson and Smith propose, so that some supervisory duties (classroom observation, for instance) are performed by others, though coordinated and overseen by the

principal; the final evaluations are the principal's task. That is, the formative tasks of teacher supervision may be shared, but the summative tasks are the responsibility of the principal and school authorities above the principal.

The activities in the four categories in table 2 (teachers, students, content, and general instruction) are neither the principal's unique responsibility nor entirely someone else's. The principal can share many of them, retaining the authority to oversee how they are being done. The domains, of course, are interactive: increasing students' time on task, for instance, may best be furthered by protecting classroom time for instruction or by advancing standards in departments and classrooms. Sharing these tasks will only increase the likelihood that the areas of instructional leadership covered here will be mutually supportive and integrated into a school's working environment.

Defining Roles When Leadership Is Shared

The fact that the buck stops with the principal raises issues about potential troubles with role definitions in shared leadership. It may be hard to introduce collegial leadership to faculties used to centralize authority. Some studies of instructional leadership, such as those by Ronald Edmonds (1979) and Shirley Jackson and others (1983), have stressed that principals need to be assertive leaders. According to Edmonds, principals in schools that are improving tend to emphasize discipline and assume more responsibility for achieving basic school objectives. Principals in declining schools, on the other hand, tend to be permissive, emphasizing informal or collegial relationships with teachers.

These findings have been commonly interpreted to mean that principals should centralize authority in themselves. Edmonds' study also shows, however, that the problems in declining schools seemed to arise from a general lack of commitment to goals and a lack of accountability from teachers and administrators. It was harder to draw conclusions about the presence (or absence) of a particular leadership style. Thus, if shared leadership is to work successfully, it appears that everyone—faculty and administrative staff alike—must know their instructional goals and must also be accountable for students' achievement.

In short, collegial leadership should not do away with the lines of authority and accountability in a school. Unless the boundaries of teachers' duties as leaders are spelled out clearly, for instance, some may assume they have the authority to make decisions the principal would prefer to have. Furthermore, total-group decision-making tends to be overused in schools, according to James Lipham (1982). In the early stages of a change process, he observes, wide participation is appropriate. But during the time new programs are implemented, the lines of authority should be clearly defined.

TABLE 2
Some Critical Functions of Instructional Leadership

Teachers

Supervision
- Observing classroom performance
- Providing feedback on instructional skills
- Giving direction and support for individual teachers to eliminate poor teaching performance

Providing Inservice Training
- Arranging for instructional-technique inservices
- Collaborating with staff on inservice needs and offerings
- Attending or being briefed about inservice sessions
- Planning a general staff development program

Evaluating Teachers
- Scheduling conferences before and after classroom observations
- Providing teachers guidance to analyze their own instructional processes
- Focusing on improving teaching rather than condemning teachers' habits or personalities
- Concentrating on issues "small in number, educationally vital, intellectually accessible to the teacher, and amenable to change" (Acheson and Gall 1987)
- Bringing in specific observations rather than general judgments
- Evaluating supervisors' techniques on the same bases used to evaluate teachers

Selecting Teachers
- Contacting all references
- Observing and having others observe teaching of job candidates and new teachers
- Hiring different types of staff to reach all students
- Following up new hirings with support and development opportunities

Protecting Instructional Time and Teacher Integrity
- Supporting teachers' professional decisions and needs
- Eliminating disruptive "official" interruptions in class time over public address systems or inclass announcements

Students

Setting and Monitoring Schoolwide Academic Standards
- Establishing academic requirements, consistent with and exceeding district guidelines
- Publicizing by word and print the high expectations of the school
- Providing counseling programs that challenge students
- Encouraging the use of standardized testing for improving academic performance

Keeping test results available for teachers' reference and goal-setting

Limiting Class Size and Controlling Class Composition

Assigning students to teachers on the basis of factors that may affect learning

Experimenting with multi-age grouping

Avoiding "typing" students socially as the basis for assigning classes

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Content

Overseeing and Facilitating Selection of Teaching Materials

Matching objectives and materials

Filling instructional priority areas fairly

Helping teachers develop materials not commercially available

Balancing Specific Program Objectives with Overall School Goals

Ensuring scope and sequence in school instructional program by forming scope-and-sequence guidelines and checking department programs for consistency with guidelines

Helping Teachers and Students in Being Aware of School's Curricula

Planning Collaboratively

Staffing committees with various viewpoints

Expecting staff input on materials selection and evaluation

(Besides the three domains discussed above, a general category affecting all areas of a school's academic life can also be shared. The following critical functions are clearly of major concern to everyone involved in the academic program of a school.)

General Instruction

Providing Rewards and Recognition for Teaching and Learning Achievements

Setting up ongoing systems for recognizing academic success, such as honor rolls, awards, or letters to students' parents

Facilitating peer-group emotional support and incentives for teachers

Setting High Expectations and Clear Goals for Student and Teacher Performances

Requiring yearly instructional goals for each teacher

Establishing policy on student promotion

Analyzing achievement test scores to find general strengths and weaknesses in programs

Maintaining order and a pleasant environment to teach and learn

Establishing and enforcing a clear code of conduct on attendance

Enforcing discipline personally with students

Refusing to stereotype students

Assigning staff and resources to confront the violation of rules

Clarifying policies personally or in writing

Encouraging Norms of Sharing

What about the schools that simply seem to resist shared leadership? Much depends upon the experience of teachers in a school—how principals have managed instructional programs in the past, for instance, or on the degree of openness in a school. Tom Bird and Judith Warren Little found that norms about privacy vary from school to school. At schools where privacy is valued, repeated teacher observations may meet with disapproval, and there is usually less sharing of information and techniques among teachers. At these schools there is also often less tolerance for shared leadership. Teachers may resist department heads making classroom observations, for example, or wielding power over their curriculum.

Bird and Little also discovered, however, that faculties who resisted shared leadership arrangements also had principals who avoided instructional support programs or who did not encourage experimentation in instructional techniques. Where schools had established a precedent of sharing improvement strategies among teachers or where principals were actively involved in staff development, faculties were more open to shared leadership. This finding makes sense: an atmosphere that encourages continuous improvement would also encourage emerging leaders among the faculty and sharing of critical functions. With a strong principal coordinating instructional support, such an environment could also encourage cooperation among teachers.

In coordinating leadership energies, the principal may benefit from carefully organizing the school staff to define clearly the leadership roles that need to be filled. Clarifying instructional leadership duties may mean reorganizing the school's administrative staff.

Restructuring for Instructional Support: An Example

In an attempt to improve their student achievement, Lake Washington School District in Kirkland, Washington, examined its administrative structures and changed them to enhance the instructional support functions. According to James Hager and L. E. Scarr (1983), a profile of building-level administrators showed that they needed skills in setting priorities and planning; implementing goals and evaluating progress; organizing; relating to staff, faculty, and students effectively; and controlling and monitoring school operations. After an exhaustive analysis of what needed to be done, a profile of ideal priorities was compiled from the administrators' responses.

The resulting organizational changes spelled out administrative responsibilities more clearly while freeing the principal and associate principal to perform more instructional leadership functions. The old administrative structure in high schools in the Lake Washington district consisted of the following, loosely defined administrative team:

FTE	*Position*
1	Principal
2	Assistant Principals
0.5	Activity Coordinator
0.5	Certified Media Specialist
3-4	Counselors
1	Career Counselor/Specialist

Assistant principals' duties were affected by the reorganization, which created a dean of students for each high school and an executive-level administrative assistant to handle much of the paperwork that previously had been done by the principals and assistant principals. In creating a full-time media technician position, the importance of instructional media was also acknowledged. Finally, a registrar was added to relieve the principals of some of their recordkeeping responsibilities:

FTE	*Position*
1	Principal
1	Associate Principal
1	Administrative Assistant
1	Dean of Students
1	Registrar (Classified)
1	Career Specialist (Classified)
1	Media Technician (Classified)
1	Counselors

The Lake Washington School District, say Hager and Scarr, believes that the reorganization has not only made the schools' instruction more effective and increased parent involvement in the schools, but has helped to reduce disciplinary actions and decrease vandalism.

Conclusion

This example, as well as other research on shared leadership, indicate that no matter how centralized the principal's leadership role in a school, it is difficult for his or her influence to be felt directly in the classroom. A practical role for principals, then, is in being an agent of instructional support and an overseer of support functions. Principals can take advantage of the network of experienced or motivated people who make up the faculty and staff to provide direct, perceptive leadership of instruction in hard-to-reach areas of instruction.

This approach does not mean that principals (or other administrators) should be eager to delegate all instructional leadership roles to others. It does mean, however, that principals can meet the demands for instructional

leadership by attempting to identify and meet those needs vital to improving student performances. In addition, sharing leadership may mean involving a whole faculty in a pursuit of excellence in learning—a pursuit that can be contagious.

Conclusion

This investigation has covered three areas that have recently received attention: instructional leadership within the major contexts of the school, the "technology" of instruction affected by instructional leaders (goal identification, staff development, observation, and climate), and the possibilities for shared or team efforts. These are only a few of the areas related to instructional leadership, but they are vital in focusing attention on *leadership in context*: on actual instructional leaders rather than on "symbolic" instructional leaders.

Perhaps the definitions of instructional leadership are so general because it is difficult to define a personal commitment in its full range. Instructional leadership involves a principal's commitment to maintaining excellence and improving the less desirable features of instruction in his or her school. Nevertheless, if it is to exist at all, a commitment must move from the stage of making symbolic acts to maintaining a working routine.

The research cited here is unanimous in assuming that principals can have profound indirect effects on students' learning experiences. A principal's impact can be seen in the school's climate, in the motivation and goal clarity among teachers, and in teachers' expectations for students. The indirectness of the principal's role ("Can I really make a difference?") should not discourage anyone from trying to create a daily routine that includes goal-oriented attention to instructional matters.

Luckily, principals need not always assume sole responsibility for instructional leadership. Depending on the school's culture, others in the school—department heads, assistant principals, or teacher committees—may participate in the planning, observing, training, delegating, testing, and summarizing necessary to providing an active, self-correcting learning environment.

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